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NEWS RELEASE

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First Statewide Youth Court Summit to Convene in Santa Cruz August 7–9

Focus Is Preventing Youths From Driving Under the Influence

San Francisco—The first statewide Youth Court Summit will be held on August 7–9, 2006, at the University of California at Santa Cruz and sponsored by the Administrative Office of the Courts' Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC), with funding provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The summit will help establish an official statewide youth court association and develop a youth court DUI prevention curriculum aimed at educating youths on the dangers of driving under the influence.

Attendees will include more than 200 youth, youth/peer court staff, juvenile bench officers, education experts, and youth-focused associations who will share ideas and best practices about youth courts. In addition, they will provide input on the DUI prevention curriculum project that will be initially implemented through California's youth courts.

The statewide effort, to be co-led by California youths, will kick off at a luncheon on Tuesday, August 8, from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. at UC Santa Cruz's Porter College Dining Hall. The event is open to the news media. The keynote speaker will be Mr. Scott Peterson, program manager of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Speakers at the Youth Summit include Presiding Judge Heather D. Morse of the Superior Court of Santa Cruz County; Ms. Christine Patton, Bay Area/Northern Coastal Regional Director, California Administrative Office of the Courts; and Mr. Christopher Murphy, Director, California Office of Traffic Safety.

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The 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health statistics found driving under the influence by these groups:

- 10.2 percent of 16- or 17-year-olds;
- 20.2 percent of 18- to 20-year-olds; and
- 28.2 percent of 21- to 25-year-olds.

The survey also pointed to the link between traffic fatalities among youth and substance abuse. According to a 2004 California Highway Patrol Report, alcohol-related collisions have increased 21.2 percent, and the numbers of persons killed in alcohol-related accidents have increased 18.6 percent within the last five years.

About Youth Courts

Youth court, a collaborative justice court model, offers an alternative to the traditional justice system. Also called peer, student, or teen court, this court model presents real consequences for first-time offenders and involves teen volunteers and former defendants in the court process. The youth charged with an offense opts to forgo the formal procedures of the juvenile court and agrees to a sentencing forum with a jury of the youth's peers—other teens who have been trained to assume various roles, including those of attorneys, court staff, and jurors who determine the fate of the offenders.

According to the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, there are more than 1,100 youth courts nationwide, with over 40 currently operating in California.

For more information: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/peeryouth.htm>.

News media interested in attending the Youth Court Summit should call Patrick Danna, Court Services Analyst, CFCC, at 415-865-7992 or Daisy Yee, Media Assistant, at 415-865-8929.

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